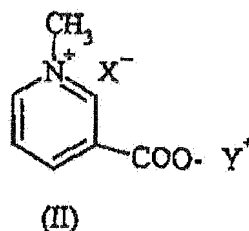
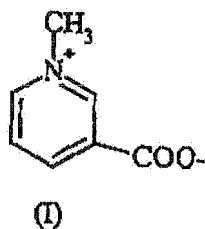


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1 to 18 without prejudice and add the following claims 19 to 38:

Claims 1 to 18. (canceled)

19. (new) An agent for repairing, strengthening and restructuring keratin-containing material and for protecting said keratin-containing material from chemical and mechanical damage, said agent comprising at least one active ingredient selected from the group consisting of compounds of formula (I), salts of the compounds of formula (I), compounds of formula (II) and salts of the compounds of formula (II):



wherein X^- represents an inorganic or organic, monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable anion, and Y^+ represents an inorganic or organic, monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable cation.

20. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, wherein said compounds of formula (I) and said compounds of formula (II) are of synthetic origin.

21. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, wherein said compounds of formula (I) and said compounds of formula (II) are of natural origin.

22. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, wherein said compounds of formula (I) and said compounds of formula (II) are constituents of a natural plant extract.

23. (new) The agent as defined in claims 19, wherein said at least one active ingredient is one of said compounds of formula (II) in a pure, betainic form thereof or one of said salts of said compounds of formula (II).

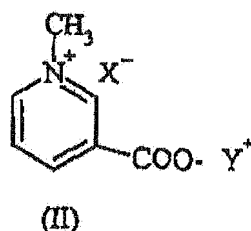
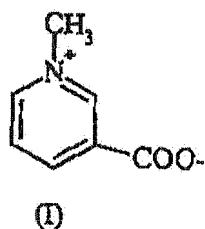
24. (new) The agent as defined in claims 19, wherein said anion is selected from the group consisting of formate, tartrate, oxalate, aspartate, glutamate, acetate, citrate, chloride, bromide, iodide, sulfate, hydrogen sulfate, phosphate, monohydrogen phosphate, dihydrogen phosphate, hydroxide, carbonate and nitrate and said cation is selected from the group consisting of protons, alkali metal cations, alkaline earth metal cations, subgroup metal cations, ammonium cations, primary amine cations, secondary amine cations, tertiary amine cations, quaternary amine cations, hydrazide cations and hydroxylammonium cations.

25. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, wherein said cation is a lithium cation, a sodium cation, a potassium cation, a calcium cation or a magnesium cation.

26. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, wherein said cation is an aluminum cation, an iron cation, a zinc cation, a copper cation, a manganese cation or a silver cation.
27. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, containing from 0.001 to 30.0 percent by weight of said at least one active ingredient.
28. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, containing from 0.05 to 10.0 percent by weight of said at least one active ingredient.
29. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, in the form of an aqueous or aqueous-alcoholic solution, emulsion, foam, cream or gel.
30. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, further comprising water and/or an alcohol, and having a pH of from 3.0 to 9.0.
31. (new) The agent as defined in claim 19, further comprising at least one auxiliary ingredient selected from the group consisting of solvents, dissolution promoters, anionic surfactants, cationic surfactants, amphoteric surfactants, nonionic surfactants, thickeners, inorganic salts, buffering substances, thiols, ketocarboxylic acids, salts of ketocarboxylic acids, UV absorbers, perfumes, dyes, conditioners, hair-swelling agents, preservatives, petrolatum, paraffin oil, fatty acids, hair-care agents and propellants.

32. (new) A method for repairing, strengthening and restructuring keratin-containing material and for protecting said material from mechanical and chemical damage, said method comprising the steps of:

a) providing an agent comprising at least one active ingredient selected from the group consisting of compounds of formula (I), salts of the compounds of formula (I), compounds of formula (II) and salts of the compounds of formula (II):



wherein X^- represents an inorganic or organic, monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable anion, and Y^+ represents an inorganic or organic, monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable cation;

b) bringing said agent in contact with said keratin-containing material at a temperature between 10 and 70°C for a time period of 1 to 60 minutes; and
c) subsequently rinsing said agent out of said keratin-containing material.

33. (new) The method as defined in claim 32, wherein said keratin-containing material is weakened and/or damaged prior to bringing said agent in contact with said keratin-containing material.

34. (new) The method as defined in claim 32, wherein the agent is brought in

contact with the keratin-containing material before, during or after exposure of the keratin-containing material to chemical and/or physical noxae.

35. (new) The method as defined in claim 32, wherein the agent is brought in contact with the keratin-containing material before a chemical treatment and/or physical treatment of the keratin-containing material.

36. (new) The method as defined in claim 35, wherein the chemical treatment comprises dyeing, tinting, bleaching or permanent deformation.

37. (new) The method as defined in claim 32, wherein the keratin-containing material consists of skin appendages and the skin appendages are keratin fibers.

38. (new) The method as defined in claim 37, wherein the keratin fibers are human hairs.